

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BANGUI 01713 01 OF 02 131841Z

66

ACTION AF-04

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 INR-05 CIAE-00

SP-02 EA-06 NEA-07 DODE-00 PM-03 PRS-01 IO-03 EB-03

CU-02 /056 W

----- 091360

R 131545Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY BANGUI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7613

INFO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BANGUI 1713

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, CT

SUBJECT: THE CAR - A NATION IN SEARCH OF AN IDEOLOGY

1. SUMMARY DESPITE A PARTY REORGANIZATION AND THE CREATION OF A "REVOLUTIONARY" GOVERNMENT THE LONG RANGE FUTURE OF PRESIDENT BOKASSA'S REGIME REMAINS UNCERTAIN. DECISIONS ARE CAPRICIOUS AND CHANGES OF DIRECTION ARE FREQUENT GIVEN THE LACK OF ANY CLEAR IDEOLOGICAL DIRECTION FROM THE TOP. DISSATISFACTION IS ON THE RISE AMONG STUDENTS AND CIVIL SERVANTS. WHILE WE CANNOT PREDICT THAT A CHANGE IS IMMINENT, IT IS CERTAINLY POSSIBLE. US POLICY IN THIS UNCERTAIN ATMOSPHERE SHOULD SEEK TO CREATE A VIABLE BASE FOR OUR RELATIONS OVER THE LONG TERM THROUGH CREATIVE AID PROGRAMS, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME MAKING THE SHORT-TERM GESTURES WHICH APPEAL TO PRESIDENT BOKASSA, ASSURE HIS SUPPORT FOR OUR MULTILATERAL POLITICAL INTERESTS AND MAKE MORE LIKELY THE RESOLUTION OF OUTSTANDING COMMERCIAL DISPUTES. END SUMMARY.

2. ON THE 24TH OF JULY, PRESIDENT BOKASSA ANNOUNCED TO THOUSANDS OF STOLID PARTY FAITHFUL ASSEMBLED AT THE BANGUI SPORTS STADIUM
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BANGUI 01713 01 OF 02 131841Z

THAT HE WAS SETTING IN MOTION A MAJOR RESTRUCTURING AND REVITAL-

IZATION OF MESAN, THE NATION'S OLE POLITICAL PARTY. THIS ANNOUNCEMENT FOLLOWED SEVERAL MONTHS OF PREPARATION IN WHICH SMALL DELEGATIONS OF MINISTERS WERE SENT TO VARIOUS CORNERS OF EUROPE AND AFRICA, INCLUDING GUINEA, MOROCCO AND LIBYA TO STUDY ALTERNATIVE POLITICAL SYSTEMS. SINCE JULY 24 THE PARTY EXECUTIVE HAS HELD LONG SESSIONS AND ALTHOUGH NO PARTY REFORM HAS YET BEEN ANNOUNCED, A NEW "REVOLUTIONARY" GOVERNMENT WAS ESTABLISHED ON SEPTEMBER 4. THE UNDERLYING PHILOSOPHY OF THE REVOLUTION IS OBSCURE AND THE CAR REMAINS A REVOLUTIONARY COUNTRY IN NAME ONLY. THE REVOLUTION IS STILL DESPERATELY IN SEARCH OF AN IDEOLOGY.

3. THE FEBRUARY COUP ATTEMPT DRAMATICALLY BROUGHT HOME TO PRESIDENT BOKASSA THE EXISTENCE OF CONSIDERABLE MALAISE IN THE COUNTRY AND THE RELAIZATION THAT MESAN HAD FAILED IN ITS FUNDAMENTAL TASK OF RALLYING THE NATION BEHIND THE PRESIDENT. HE HAS BEEN GROPING FOR APOLITICAL PANACEA EVER SINCE AND FOR WAYS TO REJUVENATE THE ATMOPHIED POLITICAL SYSTEM CREATED IN 1966. NONETHELESS, DESPITE THE APPEARANCE OF FRENETIC ACTIVITY AND REPEATED CALLS FOR DISCIPLINE, DEDICATION AND REFORM LITTLE HAS CHANGED IN THE HIGHLY PERSONAL AND ARBITRARY NATURE OF THE REGIME. THE PRESIDENT HIMSELF SEEMS UNSURE OF HOW HE WISHES THE SYSTEM TO EVOLVE. HE MAY STILL BE TEMPTED TO IMPLEMENT HIS GRAND DESIGN TO APPOINT HIMSELF EMPEROR OF UBANGUI. THE PRELIMINARY NAMING OF HIS LATEST CHILD PRINCESS ANNE OF BOBANGUI, MAY PORTEND A RETURN TO THIS DREAM. FOR THE TIME BEING, HOWEVER, HE HAS CHOSEN AN ALTERNATE COURSE AND HAS DECIDED TO ESPOUSE FASHIONABLE REVOLUTIONARY RHETORIC, PERHAPS IN ORDER TO MAKE HIS GOVERNMENT MORE PALATABLE TO HIS NEW-FOUND FRIENDS, THE PRC AND LIBYA. IT IS CONCEIVABLE HE MIGHT ATTEMPT TO COMBINE THE TWO AND TO PORTRAY HIMSELF IN NAPOLEONIC TERMS, AN EMPEROR WHOSE APPOINTED TASK IS TO CONSOLIDATE THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE REVOLUTION.

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BANGUI 01713 02 OF 02 132019Z

66

ACTION AF-04

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 INR-05 CIAE-00

SP-02 EA-06 NEA-07 PM-03 PRS-01 IO-03 CU-02 DODE-00

EB-03 /056 W

----- 092481

R 131545Z SEP 76
FM AMEMBASSY BANGUI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7614
INFO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BANGUI 1713

LIMDIS

4. BE THAT AS IT MAY, THE RUMORS ABOUT THE EMPIRE, THE SLAVISHLY ADULATORY COMPARISONS BETWEEN BOKASSA AND CHAIRMAN MAO, THE ENDLESSLY VAPID PARTY MEETINGS AND THE CREATION OF A REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL HAVE ONLY ADDED TO THE GENERAL CYNICISM ABOUT THE PRESIDENT AND HIS REGIME. PRIVATELY, CENTRAL AFRICANS ARE INCREASINGLY SCORNFUL AND CONTEMPTUOUS OF THE PRESIDENT. IN RECENT DAYS THE STUDENTS OF BANGUI HAVE PRODUCED A PAMPHLET SHARPLY CRITICAL OF THE PRESIDENT. IS THIS THE FIRST STRAW CARRIED BY THE WINDS OF CHANGE? AS YET WE DO NOT KNOW. NEVERTHELESS THERE ARE FEW IN BANGUI WHO WOULD PREDICT AN EARLY IMPROVEMENT IN THE LOCAL SITUATION. THE ECONOMY REMAINS STAGNANT AND ONLY THE DREAM OF ARAB OIL MONEY AND CHINESE LARGESSE PROVIDES HOPE THAT A FURTHER EROSION OF THE INTERNAL ECONOMIC SITUATION CAN BE AVERTED.

5. THIS IS NOT TO SAY THAT A CHANGE IS IMMINENT - IT IS, WERE#TO INCREASINGLY POSSIBLE PARTICULARLY IF STUDENT AGITATION CONTINUE, IF CIVIL SERVANTS ARE NOT PAID AND IF THE DETERIORATION OF THE ECONOMIC SITUATION WERE NOT REVERSED. TEN YEARS IN THE CENTER RING OF THE LOCAL POLITICAL CIRCUS HAS GIVEN BOKASSA A CERTAIN CONFIDENCE IN HIS ABILITY TO
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BANGUI 01713 02 OF 02 132019Z

MANIPULATE THE SYSTEM TO HIS PERSONAL POLITICAL ADVANTAGE. THERE ARE, HOWEVER, EVER FEWER PEOPLE IN THE AUDIENCE TO APPLAUD, AND THE TIME MAY BE APPROACHING FOR A NEW STAR TURN. WE SHOULD NOT BE SURPRISED WHEN IT COMES, ALTHOUGH WE CANNOT NOW SAY WHO OR WHAT IT MAY BE. IN THE MEANTIME THE POLICIES OF THE CAR GOVERNMENT WILL GO ON MUCH AS IN THE PAST WITH A BASICALLY CONSERVATIVE ORIENTATION. IMPLEMENTATION WILL BE CAPRICIOUS AND HIGHLY PERSONAL. BOKASSA REMAINS PRAGMATIC IN HIS DECISION-MAKING AND DOES NOT HESITATE TO REVERSE DIRECTIONS IF A PARTICULAR SCHEME DOES NOT WORK VIZ, HIS WITHDRAWAL OF THE RECENT RETAIL PRICE FREEZE AND THE CANCELLATION OF EXCLUSIVE COFFEE EXPORT RIGHTS TO THE EGYPTIAN FIRM EL NASR.

6. WHAT ARE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS SITUATION FOR US INTERESTS?

THE PRESIDENT WILL IN ALL LIKELIHOOD CONTINUE TO ATTACH
CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE TO HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UN, PAR-
TICULARLY AS LONG AS HIS DREAM OF A VISIT TO WASHINGTON'S UNFUL-
FILLED. HE WILL ALSO CONTINUE TO SEEK OUR ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE AND
TO PROVIDE LIMITED POLITICAL SUPPORT ON ISSUES OF IMPORTANCE
TO US. HE MAY EVEN MOVE TO RESOLVE SOME OF THE PROBLEMS
RELATING TO US COMMERCIAL INTERESTS AND INVESTMENTS.

7. OUR TASK WILL BE TO REINFORME WHATEVER POSITIVE PREDIS-
POSITIONS EXIST BY MAINTAINING THE CURRENT MOMENTUM IN OUR
RELATIONS. THIS WILL REQUIRE US TO GIVE PUBLIC VISIBILITY TO
OUR PROGRAMS THROUGH SELF-HELP AGREEMENTS,
CULTURAL PRESENTATIONS AND DEMONSTRATIONS AND EXHIBITS SUCH
AS AIDSAT AND THE TREASURES OF SPACE. IT WILL ALSO REQUIRE
PROMPT FORWARD MOVEMENT ON THE MORE SUBSTANTIVE
ELEMENTS OF OUR AID EFFORT BEGINNING WITH THE OUHAM HEALTH
PROJECT BUT GOING ON TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW PROJECT
INITIATIVES FOR 1978 AND BEYOND. THESE MAJOR PROJECTS,
TOGETHER WITH OUR PEACE CORP EFFORT WILL HAVE TO BE THE BASIC
UNDERPINNING FOR OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH WHATEVER GOVERNMENT IS
IN POWER IN THE CAR AND SHOULD, THEREFORE, HAVE A HIGH
PRIORITY FOR THE USG.
QUAINTON

NOTE BY OC/T: #AS RECEIVED.
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BANGUI 01713 02 OF 02 132019Z

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL STABILITY, FORM OF GOVERNMENT, PUBLIC ATTITUDES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 13 SEP 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: BoyleJA
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976BANGUI01713
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760345-0328
From: BANGUI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760969/aaaacghf.tel
Line Count: 200
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: BoyleJA
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <22 APR 2004 by CollinP0>; APPROVED <12 AUG 2004 by BoyleJA>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: THE CAR - A NATION IN SEARCH OF AN IDEOLOGY
TAGS: PINS, CT
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006